

London 2012: a social legacy for East London?



By Ellen Vanderhoven, October 2012

“Let’s make sure the Olympics legacy lifts East London from being one of the poorest parts of the country to one that shares fully in the capital’s growth and prosperity”.

David Cameron, May 2010¹

Legacy has been the buzzword of London 2012. An awareness of what these Games would leave behind and a sensitivity to the needs of local people were principles which helped make ours the winning bid seven years ago. Now that the Games are over and the keys to the Olympic Park are being handed over to the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), serious attention is turning to the future of East London post-2012.

The official London 2012 slogan, ‘Inspire a Generation’ mirrors our own belief that the Olympics has provided our area of East London with a unique opportunity to tackle decades of exclusion, to transform the communities we support and to secure a positive impact on the lives of young people in Newham.

That’s why we established the “Living Legacy” project, ensuring that the hardest to reach young people in East London see a marked change to their prospects. We want to “Inspire a Generation” of kids living on the doorstep of the Olympic Park so that they’ll be ready for anything, understanding they have potential, and knowing how to unlock it. We want to see a generation that plays its full part in society. And even more importantly, a generation which brings up the next generation to be the same; passing on the torch of a positive legacy; a generation which shows others how to do it

The ‘Living Legacy’ project will touch those young people that we work with in Newham, but the Olympic legacy as a whole is a much broader undertaking. This report summarises some of the projects and proposals relating to the social legacy of the Olympic Games, identifying the main parties involved and the progress of any plans.

Furthermore, it presents reactions of various parties to the projects mentioned and lays out Community Links’ recommendations for the LLDC and its new Chair and London Mayor Boris Johnson relating to the future progress of the Olympic legacy, drawing on our experiences of working in East London.

¹ David Cameron (28 May 2010) Transforming the British economy

The report focuses on three principal areas;

- 2.1. Housing
- 2.2. Employment, skills and business
- 2.3. Community resources and connections

1. Legacy promises

It is important to make clear what exactly a 'legacy' for East London means for the parties charged with delivering it and what promises have been made.

One of the most definite statements of what the Olympics should achieve for East London comes from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, as part of their 5 Olympic Promises:

Promise 2 – Transform the heart of East London.

Headline Ambitions

- 1. Transforming place: create a well-planned and well-managed environment in and around the Olympic Park which will attract business investment and promote recreational and cultural use for years to come.*
- 2. Transforming communities: build over 9,000 new homes, a large proportion of which to be affordable; and provide new sport, leisure, education and health facilities that meet the needs of residents, business and elite sport.*
- 3. Transforming prospects: help 20,000 workless Londoners from the 5 Host Boroughs into permanent employment by 2012; and create 12,000 job opportunities in the area of the Park post-Games.²*

In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government has outlined a commitment to improve the quality of life of East London residents:

A renewed commitment from the Mayor and the East London Boroughs of Newham, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich and Hackney to tackle the factors such as low educational attainment and life expectancy that have prevented East Londoners enjoying a quality of life that those in other parts of London take for granted.³

² DCMS (2008) Before, during and after: making the most of the London 2012 Games: p8

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/regeneration/olympicslegacy/>

This is defined more clearly in the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) and later reports written by the Mayor of London and the host boroughs. Here, the organising principle of *Convergence* is developed which states that “within 20 years the communities who host the 2012 Olympic Games will have the same social and economic chances as their neighbours across London”⁴. In particular, the importance of getting more local residents into work and better paid work is highlighted:

*“There is no more important factor to be addressed in tackling the persistent long-term deprivation in the Host Boroughs...The challenge for the Mayor of London and the Host Boroughs is therefore to ensure not only that such economic growth is realised, but also that the residents of the Host Boroughs are able to take full advantage of the opportunities which such growth will create.”*⁵

These statements provide some tangible benchmarks against which regeneration and development after the Olympics can be measured. In particular, the principle of *Convergence* acts as a measure of success for the Olympic legacy in East London over the next 20 years.

2.1 Housing

Who is involved? The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was founded by the Mayor of London on 1st April 2012, taking over responsibility for the Olympic Park from the Olympic Park Legacy Company. It is now chaired by the Mayor of London and is responsible for selecting organisations to develop the park into a number of residential ‘neighbourhoods’ over the next 20 years. It will also manage some of the assets and responsibilities of existing regeneration agencies in the area.

East Village (formerly the Athlete’s Village) will be the first area of The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to reopen in October 2013. The existing buildings will be converted into more than 2,800 homes, roughly half of which are owned by Triathlon Homes, a consortium of two housing associations and an urban development company. The rest of the properties belong to a joint venture between the real estate arm of the Qatar sovereign wealth fund and Delancey⁶.

The first of 5 new ‘neighbourhoods’ to be built in the Park is Chobham Manor, opening in 2015. It was recently announced that property development firm Taylor Wimpey and housing association L&Q will be responsible for developing

⁴ Hackney Council (2011) *Convergence framework and action plan 2011-2015*

⁵ Hackney Council (2011) *Convergence framework and action plan 2011-2015*: p2-3

⁶ <http://www.triathlonhomes.com/>

this area⁷. The remaining four neighbourhoods - Eastwick, Marshgate Wharf, Sweetwater and Pudding Mill - have yet to be assigned developers.

What has been done so far? The main focus at the moment is on the reopening of East Village next year when 6,000 new residents will move in. Triathlon Homes will provide affordable homes to rent or buy, of which 675 are for social rent⁸. The properties owned by Qatari Diar and Delancey will be open market homes mainly available for private rental.

Construction on Chobham Manor begins in October and should be completed in 2015. The development will contain 870 homes, of which more than 70% will be for families. Here, 28% of homes will be affordable and it has been suggested a Community Land Trust could become part of this provision. This development is aimed at responding to calls from the local community for quality family housing and more open spaces⁹.

What is still to come? The aim is to build an additional 8,000 homes in the Park over the next two decades. The LLDC currently has outline planning approval for 6,800 properties. Site wide, the LLDC has committed to 35% affordable housing and 40% family housing¹⁰. Developers for the remainder of the Park have yet to be chosen.

What has been said? Keith Fernett, director of homeless skills centre *Anchor House* has voiced his concern over the definition of 'affordable' housing. After recent changes to social housing legislation this can place rents at up 80% of the local market value¹¹; meaning a two-bedroom flat in the East Village advertised at £762pcm would be deemed affordable¹².

An East Thames Group study has found that 65% of Newham households would be unable to afford a three-bedroom property at 80% market rates¹³. The report also found that the Affordable Rent model will create housing benefit dependency among the very working families that the Olympic development aims to offer fresh prospects. This has raised concerns about who the new housing will be aimed at:

⁷ LLDC (2 Aug 2012) Legacy Corporation appoints Taylor Wimpey and L&Q to build first neighbourhood

⁸ http://www.triathlonhomes.com/new_homes/ownership_and_rental_options.php

⁹ LLDC (2 Aug 2012) Legacy Corporation appoints Taylor Wimpey and L&Q to build first neighbourhood

¹⁰ www.londonlegacy.co.uk

¹¹ Communities and Local Government (2011) Affordable Homes Programme - Framework: p15

¹² Independent.co.uk (2 July 2012) Price rise for 'affordable' housing puts Olympic legacy under threat

¹³ East Thames Group (2011) Impact of the Affordable Rent Model - Newham: p1

“Traditionally 'affordable' meant homes for working-class, low-income people. It has been redefined and now it means affordable for graduates and young professionals”

Keith Furnett, Director of Anchor House

Penny Bernstock, Housing Consultant at the London East Research Institute (LERI), has highlighted that a significant proportion of the affordable housing on offer will be for sale rather than rent, making it inaccessible to many who should be the targets of affordable housing¹⁴.

Furthermore, a report by LERI, has warned that land and property values in other areas of the Olympic boroughs may increase, displacing existing residents¹⁵.

Gavin Poynter and Penny Bernstock have signalled that developers of projects on the fringes of the Olympic Park have been quietly reducing their affordable housing requirements as economic pressure mounts¹⁶.

Community Links' recommendations

1) The LLDC should ensure that 'affordable housing' commitments are truly affordable.

- The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) has committed to ensuring that 35% of housing in the Olympic Park is affordable
- But they have not broken this down further, between Social Rent, 'intermediate rent', 'Affordable Rent' (defined as 80% of market rents under recent legislation) or various affordable buying options (like shared equity).
- The East Village contains a good mix, with no 'affordable' properties at 80% market rent¹⁷
- But in the remaining developments there is room for the LLDC to reduce the affordability of its housing while still being able claim to have reached its target of 35% affordable housing, through use of the legal 80% definition.

Therefore we recommend that the 35% target for affordable housing is broken down into clear proportions of Social Rent, intermediate rent and

¹⁴ BBC News online (6 Dec 2010) Living in the Olympic Park: Will dreams become a reality?

¹⁵ Iain MacRury and Gavin Poynter (2009) London's Olympic Legacy: A "Thinkpiece" report prepared for the OECD and Department for Communities and Local Government

¹⁶ Guardian.co.uk (27 July 2012) Affordable housing sideline Olympic regeneration

¹⁷ Triathlon Homes (2012) Triathlon East Village Letting Strategy; p8

Affordable Rent to ensure that affordable housing in the Park remains accessible to a wide range of local people.

2) The LLDC should learn from East Village and consider raising the 35% target for affordable homes

- Half of the homes in East Village will be affordable (all either Social Rent or intermediate housing)
- This means that to reach the target of 35% overall across the new neighbourhoods, future developments will have much lower proportions of affordable homes.
- East Village will open in 2013, at a time when tenders for other areas of the Park are yet to be decided.

We recommend that the LLDC consider increasing the proportion of affordable homes in later developments based on the experience of East Village.

2.2 Employment, skills and business

Who is involved? On a national level, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport take principal responsibility for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, however the Department for Communities and Local Government has a significant role in relation to the social legacy, having formed the Olympic Park Legacy Company in 2009. The Learning and Skills Council provided funding for a number of employment and training schemes associated with the Olympics prior to its closure in March 2010.

The Mayor of London and the GLA take responsibility for developing a skills and employment legacy London-wide, while the host boroughs each have specific plans for their areas. The Olympic Development Authority (ODA) is responsible for the development of venues and infrastructure for the Games, and as part of this work have a number of programmes to ensure a construction employment legacy for East London.

Westfield Stratford City shopping centre was opened by the Westfield Group in September 2011, employing 8,500 people of whom 2,000 are local residents¹⁸. It is the largest urban shopping centre in Europe and was designed to become not

¹⁸ <http://uk.westfield.com/stratfordcityleasing/news/press-toolkit/>

just a source of employment but a “lifestyle destination” for tourists and local residents¹⁹.

What has been done so far? As stated in the London Employment Skills Taskforce for 2012 (LEST 2012) Action Plan²⁰, the majority of the employment opportunities arising from London 2012 have been related to the construction of venues and execution of events. As a result, many of the schemes designed to enhance this legacy have taken 2012 or earlier as their completion date.

Below are examples of some of programmes which are already underway or completed²¹:

- **Personal Best** – training course to qualify unemployed in event volunteering and offer chance to become Games Maker
- **The National Skills Academy for Construction** – collection of projects offering tailored, on-site training for those working in construction, using the 2012 Olympic Park as a major site for training
- **Competefor** – free service that enables businesses to compete for contract opportunities linked to the London 2012 Games and to other major public and private sector buying organizations.
- **London Employer Accord** – a simplified broker service to offer integrated business support in the capital.
- **Women into Construction** – ODA project to promote construction related employment opportunities for women.

Westfield shopping centre was developed as part of the wider Stratford City development which will comprise hotels, schools, health centres and housing. The office development is expected to produce a further 1,100 new jobs²². However, like the Olympic Park, this development will progress over the next 15 years, so many details have not been established.

It was recently announced that iCity will take control of the Olympic Media Centre post-Games, transforming it into a technology, design and research centre with the potential to generate up to 4,000 jobs²³.

What is still to come? One of the core aims of the development of the Olympic Park is to not only build housing, but establish communities, which means creating jobs for the influx of new residents. However, as outlined in section 2.1, plans for the majority of the Park are not yet finalised and will develop gradually over the next 10 to 15 years.

¹⁹ Westfield Group (13 Sept 2011) Westfield Stratford City opens in East London today

²⁰ London Development Agency (2006) LEST 2012 Action Plan

²¹ London 2012 (2011) Sustainability Report – A Blueprint for Change: p112

²² <http://www.newhamworkplace.co.uk/JobsInNewham.htm>

²³ LLDC (9 Aug 2012) A golden games to be followed by an incredible legacy says Mayor

Two of the Mayor of London's major Olympic employment projects are still ongoing. The Five Boroughs Skills and Employment project provided £12.8m funding to help long-term unemployed in host boroughs into sustained employment while the 2012 Employment Legacy project used £4.5m of LDA funds to help Londoners into jobs during the Games and will continue to support them post-Games²⁴

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt announced £10 million of extra funding for tourism promotion in order to increase visitor numbers from 30m to 40m a year by 2020²⁵. Tourism is seen as one of the central ways to capitalise on the Olympic Games and increase employment²⁶.

There are also a number of regeneration projects throughout East London which are not directly linked to the Olympics but are part of the wider promise in the Olympic bid to transform East London. The redevelopment of Custom House and Canning Town is expected to produce 2,500 jobs²⁷ and The Northern Olympic Fringe development will focus on building IT-related workplaces²⁸.

What has been said? A BBC report has heavily criticised the Mayor of London's two flagship employment legacy programmes; the Five Boroughs Skills and Employment project and 2012 Employment Legacy²⁹. The projects were both delayed by a year and started in 2011, when many Olympic job opportunities were already filled. Since then, both projects have significantly under-spent, and it is questioned how the programmes can support sustained employment when it has struggled to find people jobs in the first place.

The report criticised the use of Payment by Results for support contractors suggesting that this had discouraged organisations from investing resources in helping people to find employment - 40% of funding was dependent on work being sustained for 12 months despite the economic climate and temporary nature of Olympic employment (although this was later revised down to 6 months).

Conor McAuley, Executive Member of Newham Council for Regeneration and Strategic Planning has warned that development of the Olympic Park must retain a focus on employment opportunities, not solely on housing³⁰. He suggests that

²⁴ London.gov.uk (17 March 2010) Mayor announces £20m programme to get London unemployed into Olympic jobs

²⁵ Guardian.co.uk (14 Aug 2012) London 2012 success prompts £10m tourism funding boost

²⁶ London Development Agency (2006) LEST 2012 Action Plan

²⁷ <http://www.newhamworkplace.co.uk/JobsInNewham.htm>

²⁸ Waltham Forest Council (2011) Northern Olympic Fringe Area Action Plan: p24

²⁹ BBC News online (9 Aug 2012) London 2012: Olympics jobs legacy 'falls short'

³⁰ Guardian.co.uk (23 July 2012) Live discussion: regeneration and the London 2012 Olympics

the integration of job brokerage services, such as Newham Council's *Workplace* into newly regenerated communities will help ensure this.

"In order to be job-ready, many long-term unemployed people need intensive and tailored support to overcome complex multiple barriers"

Economy, Culture and Sport Committee, 2011, p16

The London Assembly Economy, Sport and Culture Committee published a report one year before the start of the Games, highlighting some of the hurdles to fulfilling the aims of the original Employment and Skills Strategy³¹. The report³² cited the recession and public-sector funding cuts as major barriers to reaching employment targets.

It also suggested that the barriers of hardest-to-help long-term unemployed were not being properly addressed. The committee called for intensive and tailored support from Jobcentre Plus in order to help locals overcome complex and multiple barriers and become job-ready for Olympic posts.

The report also points to major disincentives to short-term work within the benefits system, meaning that many would have been worse off in short-term Olympic roles than on benefits, specifically criticizing the efficiency of the rapid reclaim service. This fed larger concerns that there could be little long-term employment legacy if people did not gain the work experience promised during the Games.

Community Links' recommendations

- 1) *We recommend that the LLDC set targets for the proportion of local jobs to be created in each major development within the park (similar to those set for the park's construction, and for Westfield)***
- 2) *We recommend that the LLDC fund training support programmes for young people not accessing college, to ensure they get the first step on the ladder towards accessing employment opportunities in the park***

2.3 Community resources and connections

Who is involved? The LLDC will determine the future of public spaces and facilities within the The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as well as some

³¹ London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (2010) Employment and Skills Strategy

³² London Assembly Economy, Culture and Sport Committee (2011) Review into the employment and skills opportunities of the 2012 Games-time period

surrounding areas over which they have planning responsibility. The permanent venues in the Park will be run by third parties but overseen by the LLDC. The financial operations under which third parties run the venues will be negotiated by the LLDC.

Transport for London and the GLA are responsible for the majority of infrastructure and transport changes.

Local authorities are responsible for other public areas affected by Olympic regeneration.

What has been done so far? Designs for the North Park within the Olympic Park are already agreed and it will be reopened in July 2013. It will provide a significant new area of green space for communities in Leytonstone and Hackney Wick as well as new residents of the Park.

The South Plaza, opening the following year, will be an open space featuring water features, gardens and 'urban beaches'.³³

Five permanent Olympic venues will remain in the Park and will be open to the public (see box 1). Admission costs have yet to be decided although it has been agreed that the Aquatics Centre will charge the same rate as local leisure centres.

The clean-up of waterways through the Olympic Park and surrounding areas will allow for water taxi services and recreational water activities. Stratford Waterfront is a prime example of waterways being developed as public spaces³⁴.

Plans for the residential neighbourhood of Chobham Manor already include a walk-in health centre, two nurseries, community spaces and local retail, as well as Chobham Academy for 3-19 year olds.³⁵

The vast majority of masterplan documents for Olympic legacy areas identify the difficulty of integrating old and new communities. The development of transport links throughout East London is seen as vital to securing connected communities in the future. Large-scale projects already completed or underway include the expansion of the DLR, Crossrail and the redesign of major roads such as the A13 at Canning Town³⁶.

³³ <http://www.londonlegacy.co.uk/the-park/south-plaza/>

³⁴ Legacy Masterplan Framework (2009) Stratford Waterfront – Area Brief

³⁵ <http://www.londonlegacy.co.uk/chobhammanor/>

³⁶ Masterplan Consultation (2007) Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration Project

Box 1. Five permanent Olympic venues will remain open to the public:**Tennis & Hockey Centres**

Mixed-use sports facilities at Eton Manor, primarily catering for tennis, hockey and five-a-side-football after the Games. These will be operated by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

The Stadium

Bidding is still underway for a permanent tenant but it will host the 2017 World Athletics Championships, which are already secured.

The Aquatics Centre

Home to two 50m pools and a diving pool, the Centre's temporary wings will be removed to reduce capacity. Operated by Greenwich Leisure Ltd.

The VeloPark

Features 6,000-seat Velodrome, alongside the BMX circuit, a 1km road cycling circuit and 8km of mountain biking tracks with facilities for visitors to hire bikes and bring their own in for repair. Operated by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

The Multi-Use Arena

London's third largest indoor sports arena with flexible seating up to 7,500, the Multi-Use Arena will be used for a wide range of sports and physical activities. Operated by Greenwich Leisure Ltd.

What is still to come? The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will include a range of community resources, spaces and buildings in order to help form successful neighbourhoods. Among these will be three schools and 29 play spaces to ensure families are able to settle in the area.³⁷

Similar resources are planned for other regeneration projects in East London such as Custom House and Canning Town. Here, the Kier Hardie Park will be combined with new libraries, sports centres and health facilities to create a range of public and semi-public spaces for residents³⁸.

Links between established and new communities will continue to be developed in a variety of ways. The East Village development will use an online forum to help residents get to know each other before they move in³⁹. The Stratford Waterfront development will feature new pedestrian bridges across Carpenters Road to link existing and regenerated areas⁴⁰. Mixed use and mixed tenancy are taken as

³⁷ Guardian.co.uk (23 July 2012) Live discussion: regeneration and the London 2012 Olympics

³⁸ Masterplan Consultation (2007) Canning Town and Custom House Regeneration Project

³⁹ <http://www.eastvillagelondon.co.uk/>

⁴⁰ Legacy Masterplan Framework (2009) Stratford Waterfront – Area Brief

central tenants of good 'place-making' across different Olympic regeneration projects.

What has been said? Few of the community building aspects of the Olympic legacy have actually begun on either a physical or social level. However, a London East Research Institute report has highlighted the dangers of attempting to create public spaces amongst the networks of privately owned sports centres, residential developments and retail spaces that make up most Olympic regeneration sites⁴¹. The report raises concerns over the formation of 'splintered communities' as access remains under the control of private interests. Even if this power is not acted upon, the loss of control and constant uncertainty over access prevents the spaces from developing into naturally shared, public places.

Community Links' recommendations

1) The LLDC should include Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in the development of the Olympic Park.

- Currently, there are tentative suggestions that a CLT could be included in the development of Chobham Manor, the second neighbourhood to open in 2015.
- Owned and controlled by the community, CLTs provide an opportunity for connection and communication, build resilience and ensure that facilities reflect the actual needs of the community.
- These characteristics could be instrumental in helping to form sustainable communities in new developments

We recommend that the LLDC ensure that Community Land Trusts feature in each of the 5 neighbourhoods to be developed in the Park.

3. Concluding remarks

A number of specific promises were made to residents of East London, guaranteeing significant social transformation of their communities over the next two decades. As the Games are now over and the true work of legacy building begins, these commitments are taking centre-stage. A sporting and health legacy are obviously crucial, but the success of the London bid in 2005 also rested on its aim of building a lasting social legacy for East London post-Games. Now begins the period where those promises are put to the test.

⁴¹ Iain MacRury and Gavin Poynter (2009) London's Olympic Legacy: A "Thinkpiece" report prepared for the OECD and Department for Communities and Local Government

Some targets have already been missed due to the economic climate and some projects have failed or been scraped. However, a substantial amount of planning and consideration has gone into the Olympic regeneration of East London and much of it has barely begun.

This report has summarised many of these projects and reactions to them. It has also outlined Community Links' recommendations for the LLDC as to how plans for the legacy could be improved and enhanced.

These recommendations feed into and have emerged from our own "Living Legacy" project which attempts to ensure that the large-scale legacy plans actually touch residents' everyday lives. We will be delivering a number of projects relating to sport, gun and knife crime and youth unemployment throughout our network of Community Hubs in the most deprived neighbourhoods around the Olympic Park. All of the learning will be shared with other practitioners and policy makers to multiply the impact.

Our "Living Legacy" is about taking seriously a promise to 'Inspire a Generation' and change the minds of hard-to-reach kids from 'I can't' to 'I'm ready'.

We won't have such a chance again in our lifetime, so we need to seize the moment now.

To find out more about the Living Legacy visit:
www.community-links.org/get-involved/living-legacy/